

# Lt. Governor Brown Holds First of Five Public Forums on Staff Recommendations to Implement Health Reform

## Lt. Governor's Office News Release

**HYATTSVILLE, Md. (November 22, 2010)** – Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown held a public forum on health reform tonight in Hyattsville to engage community members and receive comments on the initial draft of staff recommendations. The Health Care Reform Coordinating Council will review the public comments and submit its final recommendations in a report due to the Governor on January 1, 2011. The report will provide a blueprint for the implementation of federal health care reform in Maryland, as well as strategies to improve health care across the state. The Council is co-chaired by Lt. Governor Brown and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Secretary John M. Colmers.

“As Maryland prepares to implement federal health reform, it is critical to engage health professionals and community members throughout the state,” said Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown. “The Council looks forward to speaking directly with Marylanders and involving them in the decision making process of implementing health reform so that together, we can improve care, save every possible penny and expand health coverage to more residents.”

Following a series of meetings held by the Council's six workgroups, Council staff has prepared an initial set of draft recommendations on how to implement federal health care reform and improve health care in Maryland. During the next several weeks, the Council will hold four additional public meetings throughout Maryland, engaging residents and accepting comments on the recommendations. Following tonight's forum in Hyattsville at the Langley Park Community Center, similar forums will be held in Frederick, Baltimore, Waldorf and Wye Mills at Chesapeake College.

The final report is due to the Governor and Legislature by January 1, 2011 and will address several major issues, including how to enroll people and businesses who will be newly eligible for health insurance, maintain a healthcare safety net, expand and improve the healthcare workforce, develop cost-efficient payment systems, methods to address health disparities and how to provide health care information to the public.

The Council submitted an interim report to Governor O'Malley in July, which included independent research that estimated that federal health reform will save Maryland \$829 million over ten years and reduce the number of uninsured by half. The report provided a comprehensive evaluation of the federal legislation and identified critical decision points to be considered by the State. It also included potential grants and funding opportunities, a timeline of legislative and regulatory changes necessary for implementation, and a summary of public comments received by the Council.

The Health Care Reform Coordinating Council was created by Governor Martin O'Malley through Executive Order in March 2010 to advise the administration on policies and procedures to implement the recent federal health care reform legislation as efficiently and effectively as possible. As states assume the critical role of implementing health care reform, the Council will make policy recommendations and offer implementation strategies to keep Maryland among the leading states in expanding quality, affordable health care while reducing waste and controlling costs.

Lt. Governor Brown leads the O'Malley-Brown administration's efforts on a range of issues, including health care. Brown led this year's effort to pass the Medicaid False Claims Act and establish Patient Centered Medical Homes. He chairs the Maryland Health Quality and Cost Council and has championed efforts to expand access to mental and behavioral health services for Maryland's veterans.

